

# Gazette

BILLERICAY & WICKFORD

Wednesday, June 2, 2010

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**Cricket pair suspended**

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**George lends a hand**

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**Lights group in search of cheer**

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CHARRED: Firefighters work to put out the blaze in Wick Lane

Essex County Fire & Rescue Service

**House fire robs family of precious possessions**

A COUPLE have been left devastated after a fire destroyed their home.

Mick and Kathleen Judd lost most of their possessions, including precious family photos, when flames ripped through their bungalow in Wick Lane, Wickford, last Tuesday afternoon.

The blaze started in a shed at the back of the house and 60 neighbouring residents were forced to leave their homes, as firefighters feared gas canisters stored in the shed would explode.

Police cordoned off 200 metres surrounding the scene.

Crews battled the flames as the roof of the property collapsed and window frames melted.

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## PROMISE TO CLEAR ILLEGAL TRAVELLERS

Joshua Farrington  
[joshua.farrington@gazettenews.co.uk](mailto:joshua.farrington@gazettenews.co.uk)

**Villagers breathe sigh of relief as council pledges to return site to green belt status**

A PLEDGE has been made to reclaim Dale Farm from the travellers before the end of the year.

The announcement has been met with feelings of relief from Crays Hill residents, who have fought the illegal settlement for nearly a decade.

The promise to clear the illegal part of the site and return it to green belt status was made by Basildon District Council leader Tony Ball at the council's annual meeting.

Speaking at the meeting on

Thursday, Mr Ball said: "I am determined that, this year, the illegal developments at Hovefields and Dale Farm will be returned to the green belt status that the law demands."

Tony Gladwin, 26, who lives in Crays Hill, said he was behind the council's move.

"I'm completely glad to hear it. In my opinion, it's been far too long in coming."

However, the landscape gardener, who has lived in the village since he was a child, said he was worried it might be an empty promise.

"I feel like I must have heard it half a dozen times before."

"They always say they are just about to have an eviction and it never happens. It just goes back to the courts."

Another villager said simply: "At last."

Andy Peake, the chairman of Ramsden Crays Parish Council, said: "The sooner the better, as far as I'm concerned."

"We've been fighting Dale Farm for nine years now, and it's gone on long enough."

"I'm very pleased to see Tony Ball making statements like this."

In Dale Farm itself, a new sign has been hung across the entrance claiming: "We won't go."

But there was a downbeat atmosphere inside, as residents admitted they may soon be forced out.

Mary Anne McCarthy, 69, a grandmother who lives in a chalet on the site, said: "I feel sick at the thought of leaving here, but I can feel it coming closer."

"It's our home and we don't cause any trouble for anyone."

"There are sick people here waiting for operations, and mothers with young babies."

"We're just normal people."

Mrs McCarthy said the only way the 86 families living illegally on

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**THE ORCHID ROOMS**

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# t busy work t their success

baskets, people bring me their containers and I pot them up."

There is still time for schools, pubs, individuals and even football fans to enter ahead of judging, which takes place on July 4 and 5.

This year there is a new category for those with water features which sits alongside best vegetable patch, best topiary garden and best sheltered accommodation garden.

Primary pupils preparing for a garden in a pot for a special section just for children have been the challenge of following World Cup theme this year.

Entry forms, with the requirements for each section, can be picked up from Billericay Town Council offices, in Crown Yard, High Street, or the library, also in the High Street.

parties.

It has submitted an application for a licence to sell alcohol and stage entertainment.

Anyone who supports or objects to either proposal should call Roy Robinson in licensing on 01268 294676.

Comment regarding the Barleylands application should be made by June 15 and Lake Meadows before June 21.

## Travellers to be evicted

■ From front page

the site would leave would be through a forced eviction.

"I've seen the houses the council have offered and homeless people wouldn't take them.

"If I moved to a house like that, I'd be dead in a week.

"The only way we'll go is an eviction, but they'll have a fight on their hands.

"We give people no reason to hate us, but they'll have a reason if they come to destroy our homes."

In December last year, Basildon council appointed the eviction contract, worth an estimated £2 million to bailiff company Constant and Co, but no date has yet been set.

## to the 2012 Olympic Games?

AN Essex gymnast hoping to represent Britain at the 2012 Olympics swung by Doddinghurst Infant School this week (p21). We asked Year Two pupils at the school whether they were looking forward to the big event.



Lauren Thompson, 7, said: "I think it is

Rebecca Stanford, 7, said: "There are going to be lots of different sports and people that are really good at them, so it is going to be good to watch them."

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